



# Skywriter



Monthly newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club - COPA Flight 114

## August 2003

### From The Cockpit

by Stu Simpson, Vice-President

By now, most of you will have heard about Bob Kooyman's mishap back in early July. Bob's doing well and I'll delve into the incident in next month's issue.

One of the greatest things about belonging to the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club is that members have the ability to draw on an incredibly vast array of resources within the club. Between us all we have thousands of hours of flying, years of building and maintenance, and a concentrated depth of knowledge of all 'round ultralight experience unrivaled anywhere in Canada.

Being such a large club, and with most of our members located in the Calgary area, each of us has pretty easy access to knowledge we might require to fly, build or maintain our airplanes safely. The answer to an important question can be as close as a phone call away.

I strongly encourage our people to take advantage of their club membership. Call someone who knows. If they don't know the answer, they'll likely know who does. Take advantage of the advice you get to become a better builder, a safer pilot. Then, when it's your turn you can pass it on, too.

That's what makes our club strong and our sport safer and more fun.

In other news, there's been a fair amount of fly-in activity so far this summer. Your faithful editor and COPA director Bob Kirkby threw a great bash in early July. Other sites included Vulcan, Cayley-A.J. Ranch and Wetaskiwin. These are fun venues where you get to look at other planes and show off yours.

The CUFC's Air Adventure Tour will be departing Kirkby Field on the morning of August 18th. This year's trip promises to be magnificent. We've assembled a terrific group of ground crew (a million thank-you's again and again!), pilots and planes that covers nearly the entire spectrum of powered recreational aviation. We'll have dirt strip ultralights, all sorts of homebuilts, vintage classics and IFR capable conventionals. There'll be nearly 20 planes in all.

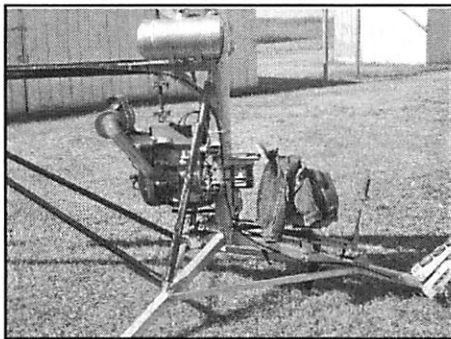
The Tour will cover more than 900 miles over five days and hit various aviation related stops throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan. I can hardly wait! Look for details and pictures of the Tour in September's issue of Skywriter. Also, Al Botting will be putting together a video of the Tour which will be completed in the fall. →

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Chestermere-Kirkby fly-in breakfast was a great success this year. There were some unusual aircraft among the 20 that flew in - see photos. A total of 150 helpings of breakfast were served and we raised \$251.00 for the Between Friends Club charity. Thank you to everyone who

made this a fun day.



Dan Hawken's T51 Mustang.



The Mosquito homebuilt helicopter.



A powered parachute demo.

# For Sale

**Free** - I'm moving and I've got 3 Subaru EA81's (for rebuilding) to give away (80 HP nominal, 1800cc pushrod, 114 lbs dry (no access, no carb)) to bona fide airplane builders. No strings attached. Doug Fortune 219-7217 (work) or 284-3945 (home) (06/03)

**Super Koala** - Rotax 503, DCDI, Culver wood prop. Airspeed, Altimeter, Tach, CHT, EGT, Hour meter, Fuel gauge, cabin heat. 200 TT on new engine and airframe. \$14,000 OBO. Dale (403)293-3826 or rhi@telusplanet.net (05/03)

**New Zanzottera Engines** - 45, 65 and 90 hp. For details and pricing call Peter Wegerich, 403-862-7148 or email: wegericp@telusplanet.net (05/03)

**Trade** - One year old Full Lotus 1260 floats, as new, for Mono 2000 Full Lotus. Russ White 250-353-2492 (04/03)

**Rotax Starter** - Recently rebuilt. \$375. Peter Wegerich 403-861-7148 or wegericp@telusplanet.net (03/03)

**Aircraft circuit breakers** - 14 in total, and would like to sell as a set. Can be viewed at

<http://www3.telus.net/public/marlysp/>. Contact Gerry MacDonald 275-6880. (02/03)

**Notice:** Classified ads are free to CUFC members. Call Bob Kirkby to place or renew your ad 569-9541 or email to [bob@skywalker.ca](mailto:bob@skywalker.ca). Ads will be dropped after 6 months unless renewed.

## Ads reprinted from the St. Albert Flying Club Newsletter

**Jodel D11** - C85, 55hrs on refurbished engine, 460 TTAF, completely refurbished, skis, \$18,500 OBO, Rob Kellar 780-476-9312.

**Team Airbike plans** - complete set, manuals, excellent condition, \$200 including shipping, OBO. Reg Lukasik 780-459-0813.

**Rotax 447** - CDI, B-drive, overhauled. Dan Pandur 780-418-4159.

**Puddlejumper amphibious floats** - used, \$2500. Dan Pandur 780-418-4159.

**Gas tank** - plastic, US Coast Guard approved, 11.5 US gals., new in box, \$75. Ron Swan 780-477-6112.

**Four Man Inflatable Boat** - hard floor, 9.5hp outboard motor, electric trolling motor, large battery, \$2500. Viv Bronson 780-460-8753.

# Flying Events

**August 10** - Pincher Creek COPA Flight 77 fly-in breakfast. Contact Al or Debbie Cornyn: [acornyn@telusplanet.net](mailto:acornyn@telusplanet.net) (Note: this was previously listed for August 9 in error.)

**August 16-17** - Lethbridge Air Show, a Snowbirds event

**August 18** - The 2003 Alberta Air Adventure Tour departs Chestermere Kirkby Field bright and early.

**August 24** - Hanna annual fly-in breakfast 0730 to 1100. Contact Mark Fredericks 403-854-4522

**September 13** - CUFC annual Fly-in

## Skywriter

Skywriter is the official newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club and is published 12 times per year. Forward your articles and letters to:

**Editor:** Bob Kirkby 569-9541  
e-mail: [bob@skywalker.ca](mailto:bob@skywalker.ca)

**Assistant-editor:** Bernie Kespe  
[bernie.raymac@shaw.ca](mailto:bernie.raymac@shaw.ca)

## Calgary Ultralight Flying Club

Meetings of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club are held on the second Thursday of every month, except July and August, at 7:00 pm, at the Northeast Armoury, 1227 - 38 Avenue NE.

**President:** Bob Kooyman 281-2621  
e-mail: [kooyman-eng@shaw.ca](mailto:kooyman-eng@shaw.ca)

**Vice-President:** Stu Simpson 255-6998  
e-mail: [bushmstr@telus.net](mailto:bushmstr@telus.net)

**Secretary:** Mac Harrison 208-0446  
e-mail: [cimac@telusplanet.net](mailto:cimac@telusplanet.net)

**Treasurer:** Carl Forman 283-3855  
e-mail: [forman.c@shaw.ca](mailto:forman.c@shaw.ca)

**Director:** Dave Procyszen 257-8064  
e-mail: [dprocyszen@shaw.ca](mailto:dprocyszen@shaw.ca)

**Past President:** Brian Vasseur 226-5281  
e-mail: [vasscurb@cadvision.com](mailto:vasscurb@cadvision.com)

Visit the CUFC web site: [www.cufc.ca](http://www.cufc.ca)

Breakfast, at Chestermere-Kirkby Field, 08:30 to 12:00.

**September 21** - CUFC Young Eagles Day



Brian Vasseur awaits the return of the poker run pilots before putting on the pancakes. The first annual CUFC poker run ran July 19<sup>th</sup>. Photo by Peter Wegerich.

## The End of Recreational Aviation?

by Brian Vasseur

It seems like every week there is another article about a business that goes under because their insurance is no longer affordable. Aviation has been no exception to this. Although I'm not sure it's worse than any other group but with the exception of COPA there's not a lot of people trying to stick up for the little guy.

The first problem is that there's not a lot of people who want to put their money at risk to insure General Aviation. I don't think the statistics justify this, but the problem here is that it's not well understood. When CNN is able to track down and do a segment on just about every GA plane crash in North America it's no wonder that investors will think that these small planes are flying deathtraps. COPA and AOPA have done alot to help this situation, it's our job to make sure that newsworthy events are good ones.

The next problem we're facing is one that has affected everyone and that's the rising claims for damages and injuries as a result of accidents. Looking at the premium I'm paying for my ultralight liability tells me that this problem has not affected us as much as everyone else. The liability insurance on my car is way higher than my ultralight. Considering my limited hours and lack of ratings I think I'm getting really good value for the money I put up every year. The passenger insurance is higher than I would like to see but it still seems reasonable in comparison to what other people are paying. Until the lawyers stop asking for million dollar wrongful death judgements and the judges stop granting those ridiculous dollar amounts we're going to have to live with this.

The two of these are certainly a negative influence on GA but they're tolerable and I think things will change as part of an overhaul of the whole insurance industry.


The third item, and I think the one that is going to make or break GA is the

collision portion of the insurance, which most of us know as the Marsh Gold Wings rates. This is unfortunately where the statistics backup the rates being charged for this coverage, and why it's just not available to some of us. Unfortunately it's the most likely reason that GA won't be able to grow.

In aviation, when you get moving coverage on your airplane you're typically insuring an expensive vehicle. A typical used C172 will be rated at \$50,000. One of the nice things about aviation insurance is that you and your agent will agree on the value of your airplane beforehand so if the time ever comes for payout there shouldn't be any surprises.

Here's where it starts to get bad. For a low time pilot your insurance company will probably want 15%/year of the value of that airplane as a premium. (If they decide you have enough experience that they'll insure you at all). Their statistics tell them that the typical Sunday flyer will, on average, total an airplane every 8 years. That's just basic math. It's a lot worse than auto insurance because by the time you're driving a \$50K car your driving skills are pretty good and you're not making bad choices.

This level of coverage is unaffordable for a lot of people. Some will continue to stay with Ultralights and inexpensive Homebuilts, but lots will also lose interest. As they lose interest their children and their neighbors lose interest. Eventually the



### Light Engine Services Ltd.

AUTHORIZED  
**ROTAX**  
REPAIR CENTRE

DEALERS FOR  
**Titan Tornado**

For Rotech Research Canada Ltd.


Call: 780-418-4164  
or 1-866-418-4164  
e-mail:  
lighteng@telusplanet.net

- Aircraft Sales - Service
- Rotax Engine Sales - Service - Parts
- Engine Test Stand Service
- Engine/Flight Instruments - Radios
- Propellers - Spinners - Accessories

RR1, Site 6, Box 11, St. Albert, AB T8N 1M8

flight schools close, and some of the other airport businesses, and pretty soon people wonder why their tax dollars are supporting an airport so a dozen or so pilots have a place to park their planes. I think in this day and age once an airport is gone it's probably gone forever.

I'm not sure how to fix this problem, but I think the answer is in making GA interesting to everyone. If the insurance companies see that this is still a growth industry and there's money to be made they will come back to compete with each other. They will find a way to make rates more manageable. In any case the success of the insurance industry is the key to whatever future GA has. →



**936-5767**

### Dealers for

**Easy Flyer**  
**T.E.A.M. mini-MAX**  
Build and fly this popular kit for only \$6500.00

**Merlin**

- Flight Training
- Ground School
- Intro Flights \$25.00
- Gift Certificates
- Rentals (Block time)

*Located at*  
**Indus-Winter**  
**Aire-Park**



## Builders Corner

by Carl Forman

### Fuelish problems

Flying around in an airplane that has an unreliable fuel system certainly cuts down on the fun side of recreational flying. I should know, I had two engine failures last year and have spent half this year trying to find out why. I've announced success in finding the problem on several occasions, only to find that the problem persisted.

In January, 2002 I was homebound, two miles from Kirkby field comfortably tucked into my Minimax and enjoying the beautiful scenery. I didn't have a care in the world. Without warning my rotax coughed, sputtered, regained a little power, and then went silent for good. I had a fifteen mile per hour tailwind at the time and felt compelled to make a steep nose down turn to line up into the wind. The actual landing was uneventful. My right fuel tank was empty; my left fuel tank was full. Once on the ground, I shut off the fuel selector to the right tank, started the engine and flew home. In December, 2002 I was departing Indus with the right fuel selector in the off position and drawing fuel from the left tank which was full. The weather was cold and the little rotax was putting out lots of power. I was climbing like the proverbial homesick angel. It all felt great until the engine quit suddenly and with such certainty that I had no thoughts of a restart. Once again the landing was uneventful. The Indus brigade had witnessed the whole thing and was on sight in no time. We soon discovered that my float bowl was dry. Fuel was poured into the bowl, I changed fuel selection to "both" and started the engine. Once again I took off from the frozen field, flew home and landed uneventfully.

I was really lucky to have engine failures over large frozen fields that were easy to land on. However, I also made some of my own luck. I wasn't flying too low.

This gave me some options when the engine quit. I had practiced forced landings quite a bit the previous summer. My reactions to the engine failure were more automatic and my panic moment was just that - a moment. I quickly picked a field to land on. I focused on that field, the airspeed and not much else. If the engine had started up on short final I was pretty committed to carrying out the landing. I read somewhere that it is usually better to land and fix the problem. The engine may sputter to life only long enough to quit again, this time in a really awkward place.

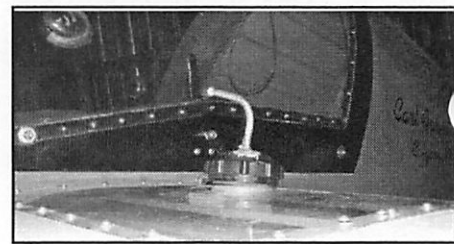
For years, the Minimax had drawn fuel preferentially from the right tank. I would shut off the right tank fuel selector for ten minutes and the fuel levels in the two tanks would balance off. It now seemed that the problem was getting worse. My first attempt to fix the problem was to disconnect the fuel lines at the "T" connection where the right and left fuel lines joined into a common line that went to the engine. I turned off the right and left fuel selector in sequence and noted that fuel flowed more easily from the left tank. I assumed that I had dislodged some obstruction in the line and that I had fixed the problem. Subsequent flying proved that I was wrong. Attempt number two was a little more involved. I removed the wing from the airplane and then I removed the fuel tank from the wing. I completely drained the tank of fuel. I was concerned that some foreign matter was sitting at the bottom of the tank and occasionally coming to stop at the fuel outlet. This would cause an intermittent fuel stoppage from that tank. I didn't find anything in the tank. However, I was amazed to find that the fuel line from the tank was pinched quite badly where it exited the wing and entered the cockpit. I replaced this piece of fuel line and once again felt that I had fixed my fuel problem. As it turned out, I was wrong



*Carl prepares to depart the field after his forced landing.*

again. Another attempt to fix the problem involved eliminating the engine primer "T" from the left fuel line. I observed that the fuel flow in the line after the "T" was removed was improved. Still the Minimax was drawing more fuel from the right tank.

Finally it dawned on me. I was looking at the Minimax one day and I observed that



*The new ram-air vent on the filler cap.*

the filler neck on the right wing tank stood out about an inch and a quarter above the right wing whereas the filler neck on the left tank only stood about three quarters of an inch above the left wing. Further, the exhaust system exits the engine compartment on the right side. Those huge exhaust pipes likely disturb the airflow over the gas cap on the right side. Perhaps the low pressure over the left wing near the gas cap was greater than the low pressure over the gas cap on the right wing! If air was being sucked out of the gas cap on the left side, then fuel would not be flowing out of that tank. There was one more clue. I have a third fuel tank in the Minimax. It is a header tank that is higher than the two wing tanks. When I turn it on it will not only provide fuel to the engine but will backfill. (continued on page 5)

*Builders - continued from page 4*

the two wing tanks. While flying on the reader tank, I have observed the left tank overflowing. Fuel was streaming out the air inlet hole on the gas cap and disappearing into the slipstream. Further investigation revealed that the gas tank was slowly but surely collapsing inwards from the top. This collapsing was pulling the filler neck downwards to the wing.

With the help of some of my flying buddies at Kirkby field I soon designed a ram air system in my fuel caps. All I needed was some quarter inch aluminum tubing and some JB Weld glue. I drilled a quarter inch hole in the top of my gas cap and stuck the tubing in. I bent the tubing to face into the airflow and used a flaring tool to widen the inlet. I've had half a dozen flights with the Minimax since installing this simple fix and the fuel consumption from the two wing tanks now seems more or less equal.

Flying is a lot more fun these days although I'm still spending a lot of time checking potential fields in case I get a pilot's bad dream, AKA silence.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the guys around Kirkby and Indus fields for their patience with me, their advice and their assistance.

### Removing exhaust stains

Exhaust discoloration from our 2 cycled rotax engines are both unsightly and difficult to clean. I've discovered a product that seems to work really well called "Mean Green". Canadian Tire sells it.

I sprayed lots of it down the side of my aircraft. It turned black as it ran. Most areas of my airplane were completely cleaned after a couple of passes. It didn't harm my paint job but, if anyone uses it, be careful to try it in a small inconspicuous area to make sure it won't harm your paint.

Happy cleaning →

## Hindsight or Foresight?

by Andy Gustafsson

When I purchased my kit, the emphasis on safety was paramount. As the building of the aircraft progressed, it was inspected by the manufacturer to make sure that I built it according to the manufacturers specifications, as it was to be registered as an Advanced Ultralight Aeroplane. An AULA aircraft can not have any changes to the structure or any modifications. It has to conform to manufacturer specifications and be on the list of T.C. approved aircraft. An AULA has to be inspected annually by the owner and recorded in writing to be presented to a T.C. inspector, if called upon. This "self-inspection" may sound vague, but it is a form of certification.

ould it be feasible to have a volunteer committee to help in these annual inspections on both basic UL as well as AULA aircraft? The inspections should also be offered to newly acquired used UL aircraft for our club members. This, I feel, would contribute to a much safer fleet of Ultralight aircraft, and promote the much needed step forward from the general public perception of the flimsy "lawn-chair-with-wings-widowmakers" of the past. It is hard to change people's minds when it comes to the safety of "small-planes" but we just have to labor on to improve our safety. We enjoy an unparalleled freedom of Ultralight flying here in Canada that is unique in the world. If we stay ahead of government involvement by promoting safety, we will continue to be the envy in aviation circles,

but we have to do everything we can to fly safe.

Jim Creaser brought up the idea of UL inspections a few years back, but nobody took the advantage of the offer. I think that if we would have taken up Jim's offer, we could have saved ourselves a number of unnecessary incidents.

We have many knowledgeable people in the club that could be asked to serve on this committee. Because of our freedom of maintaining our own UL aircraft, nobody can be forced to have their UL aircraft inspected. However, I believe that common sense will prevail. The idea has to be positively promoted to be able to work. I volunteer my airplane to be the first to be inspected.

So the question is, "Is there a need for inspections of the Ultralight aircraft in our club or is status quo adequate, that is, everyone is willing and able to perform their own inspections?"

There are many knowledgeable people in our club that could help with this. Safety recommendation inspections should be done according to the manufacturer's specifications of an airworthy aircraft in a non-biased manor. This way the committee will not be liable in case of an incident.

Fly safe. →



Andy departing Glen Bishell's fly-in. Photo by Ken Beanlands.

## Bringing Blue Lightning Home - Part 2

by Bob Kooyman

*In Part 1 last month Bob Kooyman and his friend Rod Caddick were in Shellbrook, Saskatchewan picking up Bob's newly acquired Bushmaster. Bob had just finished familiarizing himself with his new toy and was preparing to fly the first leg home to North Battleford.*

The winds continued to blow and it was overcast but the leading edge of the front was only about five miles west and winds were forecast to moderate on the west side of the front. Bob Bryson suggest that I follow the highway to North Battleford since the direct route flew over the Thickwood Hills, a treed ridge with no forced landing spots.

I took off on Runway 25 and headed down the highway climbing to 1000 ft AGL through a rain shower on the trailing edge of the front. As I approached the next town, I pulled out the sectional to confirm my navigation. I noted a large tower at the west edge of town. Funny, it isn't on the map. Wait, I had missed my turn southwest and had flown due west along the wrong road.

Rectifying my mistake, I droned along towards the town of Leask. Navigating, checking the plane's performance, and getting used to the trim kept me plenty busy. I continually checked the highway and towns as I buzzed along. The airspeed indicator showed 50 to 60 mph, but the cars seemed to be passing me. The GPS showed only 27 to 32 mph! After about 55 minutes in the air, I reached Leask.

I looked out the window at the cork-float and wire fuel gauge and began to calculate. The numbers said I'd need to cut cross-country to reach the next airfield given my fuel consumption and apparently low ground speed. Pulling out the sectional, ruler, and compass, I plotted a heading of 237 true direct to Hafford. Turning further west away from the highway, I began to fly direct to Hafford.

The GPS stubbornly refused to show any significant increase in ground speed and I ground along at 32 MPH. I periodically checked the landmarks, towns, sloughs, lakes and roads and adjusted my course to take account of the strong wind drift.

About 20 minutes out from Leask, the float bottomed out and locked down. From Bob's instructions, I had about 40 minutes of fuel remaining and I guessed about 15 miles to go. Over the ridge, the winds died off and as I came down the backside, I picked up speed to about 50 MPH for a few minutes, cheering my spirits. Looking North, I could see the treed ridge of the Thickwood Hills that Bob had warned me about. Below me were grain farms with open fields for emergency landings.



Thirty minutes further along, I had a problem. I was about five miles North of Highway 40 and near Hafford. Looking out, I could see two towns beside two lakes, either one of which could be Hafford. I checked the GPS. Set on North Battleford, it showed me 35 miles East on a bearing of 251 degrees magnetic. Out came the sectional, scale and compass. I plotted my position and decided the second town, due south, was Hafford. A quick check of the Flight Supplement confirmed the strip was on the NW edge of the town. As I approached, I spotted it straight ahead.

I arrived overhead the strip and checked the windsock. I also checked the lay of the land. I turned back north and briefly accelerated as my headwind became a tailwind. So that's what going fast feels like!

I slipped into the downwind at 500 feet and droned westward. I turned base leg

and lined up with the strip. Just as I began to turn final, a strong thermal hit my right wing and threw the plane into a sharp bank. Whoaa!. This is NOT fun I fought the controls and quickly got straightened out.

I came over the threshold at about 200 feet due to the thermal, but continued down the strip. It is nice having a little plane that only needs a short space to stop because I didn't want to attempt a go-around. I touched down about 1200 feet down the 2000 ft strip and rolled out to the far end. The east end of the strip had a teardrop turn around area and was sheltered by a grove of trees. I parked the plane, set the brake, and climbed out. I dipped the tank and decided the gas gauge was right. It had been time to land.

I marched off across the fields past a community baseball diamond to a gas station a quarter mile away to borrow a phone and try to locate my ground crew.

At the station I used the Sasktel payphone and dialed the cellular in the truck with my Telus calling card number I couldn't get connected. I called the operator who informed me that Sasktel doesn't take Telus calling cards! Sasktel also wouldn't call the cellular collect. What's next?

I tried to call with coins, but the darn phone wouldn't rate the call or accept the coins. I called the operator back and discussed Plan 4. It seems that for a charge of \$1.00 it would accept my Mastercard, an offer I grudgingly accepted. I finally got through to Rod. He'd left Hafford about 10 minutes prior to my call and would turn around for me. I grabbed a drink and a packaged sandwich and headed back to the plane.

As I walked back to the plane, I seriously looked at the situation. 350 miles at 32 mph meant more than ten hours of flying. No, I wasn't going to get home any time soon. With potential weather ahead, I had even more challenges. We also had a lack of air to ground communications, which meant more problems. It was time for Plan B. I taxied the plane to the west end of the strip just as Rod arrived with *(continued on page 7)*



*Blue Lightning* - continued from page 6

the truck and trailer. After a brief discussion, we decided honour had been



Towing blue Lightning home. Photo by Peter Wegerich.

fulfilled. Simply put, it was time for the wings to come off and to trailer the plane home.

A small grove of trees at the west end provided shelter from the wind, but we still had to work in the thirty degree temperatures.

An hour later we had the wings off. A drive down the length of the runway revealed an embankment cut the height of the trailer. I walked back 3/4 of the way down the strip to the plane. I wasn't about to pull the plane all that distance by hand, so I fired it up and taxied down the strip to the trailer.

I can tell you this; with the wings off, the Bushmaster is a GREAT go-kart. I almost had the tail up at ground idle of 3200 RPM! It was FUN!

The Bushmaster is about 15' 3" long between tail wheel and main gear, and the mains are eight feet wide. It just fit nicely on the 8 x 16 ft trailer. We used the 2 x 4's, saw, hammer and nails to build some blocks for the wheels. We loaded the plane and tied it down. I used some tarps and blankets as padding as we loaded and tied down the wings. They stuck out over the hitch but appeared to clear the Suburban.

Two hot, sweaty and thirsty men stopped for a drink at the gas station in Hafford before we drove off to North Battleford.

We paused in North Battleford to adjust the tie downs, add a bit more padding, and have lunch. We left the Battlefords about 4 PM, took turns driving, and arrived in Calgary after midnight, tired but safe.

The next day, I drove north to Bishell's strip near Carstairs to unload and shelter the plane until I could arrange hangar space. Carefully inspecting my Blue Lightning as I unloaded it, I noted one spot on a wing where the fabric was rubbed through to the metal beneath, and one slightly dented wing tip where it slid back into the horizontal stabilizer.

Overall, not bad for an 800 kilometre road trip. →

## A Morning of Promise - Part 1

by Stu Simpson

This was clearly a Saturday morning with promise. It could hardly be anything else when everywhere I looked I saw small, fun airplanes. For instance, Al Botting had his new Piper Vagabond tied down ready to start. It's amber gleam nearly matched that of the sun. Next to him was Peter Wegerich and his yellow Cubby II, a slightly shrunken iteration of Botting's bird. One could be forgiven for doing a double take when seeing them so close together.

Botting was going to loose his tail-wheel virginity that morning. He and Kirkby had plans to take the Vagabond up so Botting could get checked out in it and join the ranks of the real men who fly tail-draggers. No more training wheels for him.

On the other side of the hangars Carl Forman tinkered with the radio and battery in his MiniMAX. The Max's battery has been vexing him for months, never quite doing what he hopes it'll do. And then there's the left fuel tank issue. Don't even get him started about that! Just up the ramp was Bernie Kespe with the top cowl off his pristine Renegade

biplane. He was working on a starter problem.

And there in the corner, just in front of my hangar, sat my beloved Green Giant; loaded, fueled and eager to move the sky around.

Carl and Pete and I planned to fly to the bottom end of the Highwood Pass, about 60 miles southwest and on the very leading edge of the Rockies. There's a ranch strip there that's about 4000' long but with very challenging approaches on each end. The trip to the Highwood has never been anything less than stunning, and it promised to be so this day, too.

It turned out at the last minute, though, that Carl would have to stay home. Remember those battery and fuel tank issues? Enough said.

Pete and I blasted off runway 16 and climbed strongly in the morning wind. We leveled off at 4000' and turned southwest.

"I sure like seeing green fields," I radioed to Pete.

"Ya," he replied, "they're sure a lot nicer to look at." And a lot nicer for us to fly over, too, I thought. They don't throw as much heat and convective turbulence as the browner spring time fields do.

As we motored along I remarked to Pete, as I've done to my wingmen hundreds of times, that I still can't believe there are people down there who don't want to do this.

"I've wanted to do this my whole life," Pete confessed. "Now I've finally gotten to where I have the time and I can afford it. This is great."

Thinking about his comments for a moment, I decided that maybe there is something to be said for growing up, even if only a little bit. Wonder what our wives would have to say about that.

We started a slow climb crossing the Bow River and the new highway bridge there. We were near DeWinton when Pete called again.

*(Continued on page 8)*

*Promise - continue from page 7*

"There's a field down there that looks awfully familiar to me," he said, smiling. He referred to the last time we made this trip, coincidentally just two days short of a year ago. On that jaunt Pete had an engine failure over this very spot. He put the Cubby down in the farmer's field and effected repairs. I forget what caused the engine failure - a minor electrical fault, I think - but he was up and flying again half an hour later. The rest of the flight simply orbited over top in a wide circle while he fixed the problem.

Since then, Pete decided the tired old 503 just wasn't the right engine for his Cubby

and for the Longview area. Any conflicting, please advise."

We listened intently for several minutes but surprisingly, heard no reply. That's strange because the glider guys are usually beating each other over the head to be



*Pete's Cubby II en route to the Highwood pass. Photo by Stu.*



*Bob Kirkby and Allan Botting prepare to go flying in Allan's Vagabond. Photo by Stu.*

so he switched to a 65 horse Zanzottera, sold out of Surrey, B.C. The new mill runs very sweetly. Pete's now got more power in the Cubby, more confidence in the engine and is getting a lot more fun out of flying.

The mountains were starting to rise from the haze, jagged and grey against the horizon, and growing larger with each passing mile. A glance out the right side revealed we were coming in line with the departure path of Black Diamond's runway 14. We switched over to 123.4, the frequency that Black Diamond's gliders use.

"Black Diamond traffic, be advised ultralights Dragonflies 1 and 2 are currently 6 miles southeast at 4600 feet, south-westbou

the first ones in the air on such a day. We made one more call a few minutes later before clearing their area, but still heard nothing back.

We crossed highway 22 between Black Diamond and Longview. The terrain was rising faster now with the onset of the foothills. We eased our birds a few hundred feet higher and then set up to take pictures of each other with the hills and mountains in the background.

Pete's Cubby was stunning against the brilliant green foliage below, and the magnificent Alberta blue above.

"You sure have a beautiful airplane, Pete," I commented admiringly.

"Ya," he said in his usual laconic manner, "I'm pretty happy with this yellow. I'd have bought the plane anyway, regardless of colour, so the yellow's just a bonus." I chuckled at his remarks and went back to taking pictures.

My photos done, I marveled for a few moments at the raw, blatant power of the Rockies. Though Pete and I had the power of flight at our disposal and were flying above all else, we weren't flying above them. And there they were in front of us, filling our windscreens, daring us to try. I figured it'd be wisest that morning to stick to our original plan and meet the Rockies' altitude challenge another day.

*To be continued next month.*

**51 SQUADRON SALES LTD.**  
SALES & SERVICE  
Titan T-51 Mustang Sales  
Titan Tornado  
Ultra-Lite & Experimental  
DAN HAWKEN 403-931-4243